

## Robert Selden Garnett to Andrew Jackson, February 7, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### ROBERT S. GARNETT TO JACKSON.

Tappahannock, Va. , February 7, 1831.

*My dear Sir* , In consequence of a letter I received yesterday from Mr Carter Beverly informing me that he had sent you a copy of a statement which he has made to me concerning a conversation between Mr Crawford and myself, I have thought proper to offer to you the following statement. I have no recollection of several of the details given by Mr Beverly, but with regard to the conversation with Mr Crawford, and also that between Mr Monroe, Col Taylor<sup>1</sup> and myself, so far as relates to the declaration of Mr Monroe that there was no division in the cabinet, my recollection is clear and distinct, and I can be under no mistake. Mr Beverly is also mistaken in saying that I intended his statement for the public eye, as on

<sup>1</sup> John Taylor of Caroline.

that subject I gave him no assurance one way or the other. In consequence of his having informed me that when he was in Tennessee, at your house, he had told you of my conversation with Mr Crawford, I addressed a letter to him to enquire whether his recollection of that conversation corresponded with my own. I have conversed with several other gentlemen who heard me repeat it soon after my return from Washington, and they all confirm the statement which I am now about to give you. During the period I refer to, I kept a journal in which I wrote down at night, or the following morning, every thing I had heard or observed in the course of the preceding day which I thought it important to

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remember. In this case, one day only intervened between the conversation and the record. From this journal I send you the following extract.

“The night before last Col Taylor proposed we should go and see the President, as Everett said he frequently complained of our not coming, though we lived so near. Newton w'd not go because he had to shave and put on a clean shirt. We found him in the drawing room with Hay, Everett, Moore and Farely. M. and F. and E soon went out , and so did Hay who was going to Sect'y Thompsons. The P. then talked very freely about public affairs, gave us an account of the proceedings of the government in relation to the Seminole war. He stated what I have frequently heard before that the cabinet were perfectly agreed that he should not answer Gen: Jackson. It is however well understood that Crawford, out of the Cabinet, used his endeavours to have Cobb's resolutions passed; and I could not forbear telling the President, that in conversation with me about Cobbs resolutions, while they were pending, Mr Crawford had said, ‘Jackson ought to be censured’. He expressed surprise, and seemed to look regret. He says ‘the members of the cabinet are still in harmony among themselves, apparently’.”]

I again say, that in this statement, there can be no mistake. I am as certain of it as that I exist and am now writing to you, and I recollect the tone and the emphatic manner in which the speech was made. The truth is, that Clay and Crawford both candidates for the Presidency, and fearing your great popularity with the American people, were anxious to put you down, and thus remove the principal impediment to the gratification of their ambition. This opinion was expressed to me by judge Nelson during the debate on the Seminole war, and I dare say must have occurred to many. Subsequent events have greatly confirmed its correctness. . . .2

2 Later on Garnett sent Jackson the following corroborating statement from J. S. Barbour, dated Feb. 14, 1831:

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“Soon after the meeting of Congress in the month of December 1823, I visited Mr Garnett of Virga. at his lodgings in this City. The ensuing election of President became a prominent topick of Conversation. I remember very distinctly that Mr Garnett said in the progress of the conversation; that at some previous session of Congress, Colo: John Taylor of Caroline and himself had called to see Mr Monroe, when the Seminole war and General Jacksons conduct in it, were subjects of enquiry on the part of Colo Taylor. And that in reply Mr Monroe assured Colo Taylor, that the Cabinet opinion in relation thereto, was without any division among its members. Mr Garnett further said, that at some antecedent period of time Mr Crawford had expressed himself in terms of strong disapprobation of General Jacksons course in that war. Colo Taylor who was present corroborated what Mr Garnett had said of his enquiries of Mr Monroe and the reply given to those enquiries. I recollect that Mr Newton then a member from Virga. was also present.”